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Letter dated 27 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that starting at 10:00 a.m. on 2 June 2016, the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations will hold an open debate in the Security Council, within the framework of the Presidency of France, on the theme of "Sexual violence in conflict situations", with a particular emphasis on the link between sexual violence and human trafficking. The concept note for this event is annexed to the present letter (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as official documents of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) François **Delattre**

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Annex to the letter dated 27 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme "Conflict-related sexual violence: responding to human trafficking in situations of conflict-related sexual violence", 2 June 2016

1. Introduction

The month of June will be marked by the inaugural commemoration, on 19 June, of the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, which was approved by the General Assembly on the same day in 2015, in order to pay tribute to the survivors of sexual violence and to help them to speak out against this scourge.

The date of 19 June commemorates the breakthrough adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council recognized sexual violence as a tactic of war and a threat to global peace and security, underscoring that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or constitutive acts with respect to genocide.

In the lead-up to the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, the open debate will help to raise awareness by promoting the role of women in addressing and preventing sexual violence in conflict, while focusing on a particularly worrisome pattern identified during the course of the past year and in recent months: the trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls, in situations of conflict-related sexual violence.

2. Background and key challenges

Key patterns of sexual violence as a tactic of war: the case of human trafficking for sexual purposes

- *Root causes — conflict and displacements*. In connection with the mass migration crisis driven by conflict and rising violent extremism, the Secretary-General, in his report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2016/361), deplores the deliberate threat and use of sexual violence as a form of persecution to displace populations such as in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria and the Horn of Africa, with over 950,000 new refugees and migrants reaching Europe in 2015. Such displacements and cross-border activities have led to a rise in trafficking in persons for various sexual purposes, such as sexual slavery, prostitution, forced marriage, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization or other forms of sexual violence.

- *Motivations for criminal or extremist groups*. Human trafficking is committed by non-State armed groups, in particular violent extremist and terrorist groups, in order to: (a) attract or compensate fighters — the promise of sexual access to women and girls has been used in Da'esh propaganda materials as part of its

recruitment strategy; (b) perpetuate the group — forced pregnancy or sterilization of trafficked women are part of a strategy to perpetuate the groups, for example, Boko Haram abducted and raped women and girls and forced them into marriage; and (c) generate revenue — groups have leveraged the threat of sexual violence to extract ransom payments from the families of abducted women and girls. Trafficking for the purpose of sexual slavery or sexual exploitation therefore contributes to the funding and sustainment of criminal and terrorist groups. In January 2015 alone, Da'esh extorted $850,000 for the release of 200 abducted Yezidis; while in 2014, ransom payments to Da'esh from the Yezidi community amounted to between $35 million and $45 million (see S/2016/92 and S/2016/361).

- *Development of physical and virtual markets of trafficking*. This rising trend has turned sexual violence in conflict into a major cause of the development of criminal markets for trafficking. This trade occurs in both physical and virtual marketplaces, through the use of social media and communication technologies by criminal and violent extremist groups. This stresses even more the need for a strategic communication to counter the terrorist narrative online.

- *Consequences for survivors*. Women and children are often sold multiple times and are subjected to a variety of forms of sexual violence, which can cause deep, long-term physical and psychological trauma. Stigmatization and socioeconomic marginalization of victims may even increase the trauma or extend recovery periods. Local women's groups should be supported in their efforts to support survivors and to combat and prevent trafficking and participate in the development and implementation of anti-trafficking strategies.

Targeted groups trafficked for sexual purposes

- *Women and girls*. Abductions for the purposes of sexual slavery or forced marriage to combatants have increased, in particular through cross-border trafficking of Syrian and Iraqi women and children. An estimated 1,500 civilians may have been forced into sexual slavery. The trafficking and trading of women and girls is therefore part of a political economy of war and an ideological strategy of violent extremist groups.

- *Refugees and internally displaced persons*. Criminal infrastructure designed to exploit migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, particularly unaccompanied minors, trafficked for commercial sex and sexual slavery, have developed, thus increasing the risks for many refugees and asylum-seekers of renewed sexual violence. People smugglers are demanding sex as "payment of passage" before leaving a country or at checkpoints.

- *Women, children and unregistered births*. Women, who lack residency and work permits, and children who lack identity documents, are at greatest risk of exploitation. In particular, children born of rape who generally lack identity documents, risk reprisals and social marginalization due to their father's identity or affiliation. This is both a human rights and a security issue, as such children may face a heightened risk of radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups in the absence of other socioeconomic opportunities.

- *Minorities*. Women and children from targeted minorities, in particular the Iraqi Yezidi community, have been sold, traded, gifted to fighters, trafficked and held for ransom. Da'esh allegedly issued a "regulation" setting out the prices to be paid for Yezidi and Christian women and girls, the amounts varying according to age and other characteristics.

3. Recent normative developments in the Security Council

In the presidential statement on human trafficking adopted in December 2015 (S/PRST/2015/25), the Security Council identifies the link with sexual violence and stresses the need to deter, detect and disrupt trafficking in persons, in particular by violent extremist groups. It deplores such trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual slavery or sexual exploitation and reiterates the critical importance of implementing resolution 2195 (2014), in which it expresses concern, inter alia, that terrorists benefit from the trafficking of persons.

In its resolution 2253 (2015), on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts, the Council condemns the abduction of women and children for sexual exploitation and trafficking and notes that any person or entity who transfers funds to ISIL directly or indirectly in connection with such exploitation would be eligible for listing by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011).

In its resolution 2242 (2015), on women, peace and security, the Council does not explicitly raise the issue of trafficking of women and girls, but expresses deep concern that acts of sexual and gender-based violence are known to be part of the strategic objectives and ideology of certain terrorist groups, used as a tactic of terrorism and an instrument to increase their power through supporting financing, recruitment and the destruction of communities (see S/2015/203).

4. Objectives and questions

The open debate aims to assess existing tools as well as gaps at the national, regional and international levels and to assess how to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, in particular with regard to the issue of human trafficking. In this context, it is our collective responsibility to tackle these challenges: how can the participation of women and local women in civil society be promoted in the development of anti-trafficking and counter-terrorism strategies? How can the impact of sanctions against individuals and entities involved in trafficking for the purposes of sexual violence be improved? How can financial flows generated by trafficking for sexual purposes be curbed and controlled? How can peacekeeping missions better integrate the protection of civilians from trafficking for sexual purposes?

5. Format and speakers

The open debate will be held on 2 June 2016 at 10 a.m. in the Security Council Chamber. It will be chaired by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations.

The following speakers will brief the Security Council: the Secretary-General; the Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the Founder and President of Zenab for Women in Development in Sudan, on behalf of the Non-Governmental Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Fatima Ahmed.